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828 situation everybody takes it for granted that any person participating either already knows, or wants to know, how to behave in a manner appropriate to the situation and in accordance with his level of maturity. An effort to learn is thus evoked as an adaptation to the demands of a real situation. It is not that people expect one another
[183 to act with automatic and machine-like precision; for in point of fact
876] Tale culture tolerates considerable elasticity in the patterns of behaviour. We have an analogy in our own culture in the expectation entertained by most adults that little girls want to play with dolls and little boys with toy engines. We act on this expectation whenever we buy presents for children. How exactly this influences the play of Western children has not been investigated, but there can be little doubt that it does. We expect children to know how to play without being taught.

863 In contrast to this, many Western mothers nowadays do not expect their children to acquire clean habits simply in the normal course of development, and therefore set out to train them deliberately from earliest infancy in these habits. Tale mothers never train their children deliberately to be clean. When they reach the stage of walking and talking easily, children are expected not to defecate indoors in the daytime but to be asked to be taken outside or to run out themselves. A lapse meets with an expression of disapproval and a reprimand: 'You are big enough already. Can't you go outside to defecate?'
868 The child learns in response to the expectation that it is capable of
198 normal behaviour in that respect.[1] Similarly, infants are expected to

[1] The example is intended to illustrate how the expectation of normal behaviour acts but, of course, other factors are also involved in the Tale child's acquisition of clean habits. These habits are learnt gradually, not all at once. Before it can walk or talk, its mother or an older child sometimes takes it outside when it shows signs of wishing to defecate. By the time it is expected to be clean it is being drawn into the play-activities of slightly older children, most of which take place out of doors. The need to adapt itself to the habits and standards of its older playmates is a strong stimulus to the child to learn not only bowel and bladder control but also the rules
[576 of etiquette. As the Tallensi have no special sanitary arrangements, but excrete
514] in the open anywhere near the homestead, taking care only to keep a little way from the paths and from any people who may be about, it is easy for a child to learn the adult convention from the example of older children and adults. Clean habits, like other skills, are learnt as organic responses (see below, p. 10). I shall refer to this matter again, in another context, in a later section.

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understand or to be eager to understand the language of adults, and no one would think of using ' baby talk ' to them.

As normal behaviour is always expected, no one hesitates to correct a child or adult who behaves inappropriately through ignorance, and the correction is generally accepted with alacrity and ease. If children are allowed to be present at the activities of adults, they are assumed to be interested in and to understand what is being said and done. No one would inhibit his conversation or actions because children are present, or withhold information upon which adequate social adjustment depends from a child because it is thought to be too young. Tallensi, therefore, are not surprised at the comprehensive and accurate sexual knowledge of a 6-year-old, though direct instruction in these matters is never given. As with the ordinary skills and interests of daily life, they expect children to want to know such things. *Naawun mpaan ba*, ' Heaven teaches them ', they say, or, as we should put it, it is perfectly natural.

It is known that some people learn more quickly and accurately than others, that variations in skill and ability exist. But the idea of precocity or retardation as a quality of a child's character has no place in Tale thought. A child may intrude on a situation where some one of his or her degree of maturity has no business to be and will be categorically dismissed then; but it would never be rated for being ' old-fashioned '. Every child is expected to be eager to know and to do as much as its social space and its stage of psycho-physical development permits. Hence, though it is clearly recognized that knowledge, skill, and capacity for social adjustment grow cumulatively, the Tallensi have no technique of isolating a skill or observance from the total reality and training a child in it according to a syllabus, as, for instance, we train children in dancing, the multiplication table, or the catechism. Tale educational method does not include drill as a fundamental technique. It works through the situation, which is a bit of the social reality shared by adult and child alike.

The conceptions and practices we have been considering constitute the significant factors in education by participation in practical tasks which is often described as the distinctive method of primitive societies and is as conspicuous in Taleland as in every other preliterate country. It may be observed that even in Western society the